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## LONGINUS AND LATER LITERARY CRITICISM

(Concluded from page 126)

Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch writes thus of Longinus<sup>28</sup>:

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries he holds sway—increasing sway—over the minds of all men who think about literature. Then all of a sudden, as it were, he fades almost quite away, and during the nineteenth century critics seldom concern themselves to quote him. . . .

One reason for this, he says (158), is that the treatise 'On the Sublime' is the "utterance of a man in despair with his age, and particularly in despair with it over its loss of Liberty. . . ." Later (160), he says, ". . . Romantics had no use at all for the delicate regretful consent of Longinus in the decadence of his age: for these men were fighters. . . ." The second reason given by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch (160-161) is that the very finality of Longinus's word on literature does not commend it to modern readers, especially the young.

This statement seems to me wrong, or at least misleading. Even if we grant, for the sake of argument, Longinus's disappearance in the nineteenth century, the two reasons given by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch for his disappearance are surely not the right reasons. How that bitter and scathing indictment of the love of money and the love of pleasure with which the essay as we have it ends can be called "the delicate regretful consent of Longinus in the decadence of his age. . . ." I do not see. If Longinus is in despair with his age, it is not over its loss of liberty in the ordinary sense of the word 'liberty'. The philosopher whom he quotes (44.1) suggests that the lack of democracy and freedom is the reason for the dearth of high utterance in their own time. But Longinus (44.6-10) says:

. . . the love of money. . . and the love of pleasure make us their thralls, . . . the love of riches being a malady which makes men petty, and the love of pleasure one which makes them most ignoble. . . . For vast and unchecked wealth is accompanied. . . by extravagance, and as soon as the former opens the gates of cities and houses, the latter immediately enters and abides. And when time has passed the pair build nests in the lives of men, as the wise say, and quickly give themselves to the rearing of offspring, and breed ostentation, and vanity, and luxury. . . . If these children of wealth are permitted to come to maturity, straightway they beget in the soul inexorable masters—insolence, and lawlessness, and shamelessness. . . . sublimities of soul fade and wither away and become contemptible, when men are lost in admiration of their own mortal parts and omit to exalt that which is immortal. . . . In an age which is ravaged by plagues so sore, is it possible for us to imagine that there is still left an unbiassed and incorruptible judge of works that are great and likely to reach posterity, or is it not rather the case that all are influenced in their decisions by the passion for gain? . . .

Is this the language of "delicate regretful consent. . .

<sup>28</sup>Studies in Literature, Third Series, 154 (see note 10, above).

in. . . decadence. . . ."? Many of the seventeenth and the eighteenth century critics echoed the theory of Longinus's philosopher, but the words of Longinus himself sound more like those of Blake, the "fighting poet", or of Shelley (in A Defence of Poetry), "Poetry and the principle of Self, of which money is the visible incarnation, are the God and Mammon of the world". These men are fighters—yes; but they take refuge, as Longinus did, in the sublimities of nature or of their imaginings or of the high utterance of mighty poets.

Nor does the second reason advanced by Sir A. T. Quiller-Couch seem to me any more cogent. We may well feel, as we read Longinus's treatise, that its author has said the only right word on a passage or on a point. Finality in that sense there is, but finality that puts an end to discussion and to individual opinion is very far from Longinus's purpose or thought. He constantly reminds us that what he is expressing is his own opinion, and he concludes his discussion of one debated point by saying (36.4), "Such are the decisions to which we have felt bound to come with regard to the questions proposed; but let every man cherish the view which pleases him best". For the strong appeal of Longinus to modern readers, especially young readers, I can vouch out of my own early experience and out of that of many of my students.

It is true, of course, that the critics of the nineteenth century do not quote Longinus as did those of the two preceding centuries. But this is only natural in view of the universal change in critical theory and practice which took place with the coming of romanticism, and it does not necessarily argue a lack of knowledge of Longinus or a cessation of his influence. I venture to say—although I have made no calculations—that the name of Aristotle, which was mentioned in the height of neo-classicism far more often than that of Longinus, suffers a corresponding neglect in the nineteenth century. Wordsworth probably knew neither of them: in the 1800 Preface to Lyrical Ballads he wrote, "Aristotle, I have been told, has said. . . ." The Romantic critics had passed beyond the stage of citation of authorities and appeal to them. The eighteenth century relied upon 'authority'; the nineteenth regarded an 'authority' as something to be examined and interpreted. So does the twentieth century<sup>29</sup>.

Moreover, it is not quite true that Longinus softly and suddenly vanishes. Although Wordsworth did not know him, the contributors to The Quarterly Review did. Goethe knew him, though, by his own admission, with nothing but book-knowledge<sup>30</sup>. Hazlitt knew

<sup>29</sup>In this connection, it will be interesting to read as a commentary upon Professor Nitchie's words here—and mayhap a correction of them—Professor Pritchard's article, Aristotle's Poetics and Certain American Literary Critics, THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 27.81-85, 89-93, 97-99. On Wordsworth and Aristotle see THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 27.84, B, with notes 34, 35. C. K. >

<sup>30</sup>See Dichtung und Wahrheit 3.12.

him—how well I will not say, though he claims to be able to translate one of his words better than Gifford had rendered it, and does so translate it<sup>30</sup>. De Quincey<sup>31</sup> made some penetrating comments on the translation of the title of the essay, though he was disposed to be jocular at the expense of Master Longinus, "this old critical posture-master". Macaulay<sup>32</sup> knew him: "... the philosopher of Palmyra ought to have entitled his famous work, not 'Longinus on the Sublime', but 'The Sublimities of Longinus'". Schiller and Sainte Beuve, Arnold and Pater, Chateaubriand and Coleridge must have known him, although they never speak of him. The spirit of Longinus lived in the nineteenth century, and it lives even in the twentieth, just as it did in the seventeenth and the eighteenth, when his influence was undoubted, and back in the fourteenth, in Dante's discussion (in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*) of diction, when the Greek treatise was lying unknown in a manuscript. I am trying at this point, not to prove the necessity of postulating a direct influence of Longinus upon later critics, but rather to demonstrate that great critical minds run in the same channel, so that, despite rules and schools, the fundamentals of criticism appear in all times the same. If one starts to trace an idea, he may be bewildered to find that every major critic he meets has expressed it in one form or another, and he comes to the conclusion that it originated somewhere in a time before critics were. We find the temper of a great critic's mind to be very like that of the minds of other great critics, and we may start with almost any one of them as a norm. If, as I have been doing here, I start with Longinus, I can easily show that all the rest resemble him.

The free spirit of Dryden, inquiring, enthusiastic, reconciling art and nature, rules and individuality, and his flexible, figurative style are akin to the spirit and the style of Longinus. But the 'family' of the Greek critic includes many others who were neither neo-classicists nor his professed admirers. Indeed, some of them claimed no acquaintance at all with him. Although in general Wordsworth had little affinity with Longinus, since he was too much occupied with his theory of simple subjects and simple diction to be much concerned with the sublime, saying, indeed, that ordinary life is so far removed from the sources of sublimity in the soul of man that there is little chance for the poet<sup>33a</sup>

to use elevated subject-matter and diction, yet he agrees with Longinus in believing that figures of speech should be prompted by passion, and that the mean and ordinary word should be used when it is suitable. In maintaining that the poet should write with his eye on the object he is supposed to be describing, both Wordsworth and Longinus were opposing those who wrote at second-hand instead of copying from life. Longinus's belief that sublimity is the echo of a great soul has its parallel in Wordsworth's conception of the moral value of poetry. To both these writers sublimity is a matter not merely of goodness, but of greatness also. Hazlitt knew Longinus. Moreover, his definition of the essence of poetry<sup>33</sup>, "to strike and fix the imagination, whether we will or no, ... to be never thought of afterwards with indifference", is like Longinus's description of the effect of sublimity; and Hazlitt's creed as a critic, "I have endeavoured to feel what was good, and to give a reason for the faith that was in me when necessary and when in my power", is in the spirit of Longinus.

Arnold's theory, too, was Longinus's practice. Arnold's famous definition<sup>34</sup> of the function of criticism, "to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas", describes the procedure in the *Περὶ Τύχης*. Longinus obviously has always in his mind verses and expressions of the great masters, and applies them as a touchstone to other poetry, as Arnold recommended later (in *The Study of Poetry*). Arnold's definition of "the grand style" reminds one of Longinus's conception of the sublime, except that Arnold's view is more limited, especially in that it excludes humor<sup>35</sup>: "I think it will be found that the grand style arises in poetry, when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or severity a serious subject". In two sentences written by Arnold, expressing an idea less pervasive in his work than these others, the very accents of Longinus, as he speaks of the power of literature, are heard. When Arnold says<sup>36</sup>, "Magic of style is creative: its possessor himself creates, and he inspires and enables his reader in some sort to create after him. And creation gives the sense of life and joy: hence its extraordinary value", back of him is Longinus's statement (7.2), "... For, as if instinctively, our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard. ..."

The sense of what Arnold called *architectonicé* was strong in him, in Walter Pater, and in Longinus. As we read these words in Pater's essay on Style,

... With some strong and leading sense of the world, the tight hold of which secures true *composition* and not mere loose accretion, the literary artist, I suppose, goes on considerably, setting joint to joint, sustained by yet restraining the productive ardour, retracing the

enim>, nisi quod versiculi sunt, nihil est aliud cotidiani dissimile sermonis. ... Cicero and Horace are at one with Longinus rather than with Wordsworth. Longinus (13.1) says of Plato, "... Although Plato thus flows on with noiseless stream, he is none the less elevated. ...". C. K. >

<sup>30</sup>See his essay, *On Poetry in General*.

<sup>31</sup>See *The Function of Criticism*.

<sup>32</sup>See Arnold, *On Translating Homer: Last Word*.

<sup>33</sup>See *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series.

<sup>30</sup>The word is *ἐναγώνιον*; it occurs in Longinus 9.13. See William Gifford's review, in *The Quarterly Review* 19 (1818), 424, of Hazlitt's *Lectures on the English Poets*, and William Hazlitt, *A Letter to William Gifford*, in *The Collected Works of William Hazlitt*, Edited by A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover, 1.401 (Twelve volumes. London, Dent, 1902-1904).

<sup>31</sup>A Brief Appraisal of the Greek Literature (1838), in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, Edited by David Masson, 10.300, and note, 306-307 (Fourteen volumes. Edinburgh, Adam and Charles Black, 1890).

<sup>32</sup>See T. B. Macaulay, *On the Athenian Orators* (1824), in *Critical, Historical, and Miscellaneous Essays*, 1.142 (Six volumes. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Sons, 1860).

<sup>33a</sup>I suppose that Professor Nitchie means here a poet who dealt, as Wordsworth dealt (see the text above), with "simple subjects", the simple subjects of everyday life. I am reminded of what Horace says (*Sermones* 1.4.39-42): *Primum ego me illorum dederim quibus esse poetas excerptam numero, neque enim concludere verum dixeris esse satis neque, si qui scribat uti nos sermoni propiora, putes hunc esse poetam*. This idea Horace elaborates in 43-62; see especially 45-53. With this whole passage compare Cicero, *Orator* 67 *video visum esse nonnullis Platonis et Democriti locutionem etsi absit a versu, tamen, quod incitatus feratur et clarissimis verborum luminibus utatur, potius poematum quam comicorum poetarum, apud quos < = apud eos*

negligence of his first sketch, repeating his steps only that he may give the reader a sense of secure and restful progress, readjusting mere assonances even, that they may soothe the reader, or at least not interrupt him on his way. . . .

we remember what Longinus says (39-40) of composition both in the sense of the selection and combining of details and in the sense of joining words in melodious periods. Pater's doctrine of the unique and exact word derives directly from Flaubert. The spiritual father of both, although both were probably unaware of the fact, is Longinus.

Other French critics besides Flaubert seem to have drunk from the spring from which Longinus drank. Diderot's enthusiasm for the romantic writers and his admiration of 'crude' Shakespeare are due to his belief that, although 'la clarté' of the neo-classicist 'is good to convince, it has no power to move'. Chateaubriand's imaginative criticism in the *Genie du Christianisme* and the *Essai sur la Littérature Angloise*<sup>39a</sup> and his use of the comparative method are both romantic and Longinian, as are his comments on beauties and faults, on the irregular genius and on simplicity, on 'transport' and on the false sublime. Joubert's *Pensées* fairly sparkle with jewels that match those in Longinus's crown. When Sainte-Beuve, in 'What is a Classic?', speaks thus to his contemporaries of their relation to the great writers of the past,

'... while speaking our own language, and submitting to the conditions of the times in which we live, whence we derive our strength and our defects, let us ask from time to time, our brows lifted toward the heights and our eyes fixed on the group of honoured mortals: *what would they say of us?*'

we hear Longinus recommending (14.2),

... Still more effectual will it be to suggest this question to our thoughts, 'What sort of hearing would Homer, had he been present, or Demosthenes have given to this or that when said by me. . . .'

Goethe writes, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, that, during the period of his residence at Wetzlar, the ancients, Aristotle, Quintilian, Cicero, Longinus, brought him no help in his thinking because he had not the requisite knowledge; his only knowledge at that time was knowledge gained from books. Perhaps, however, the yeast of ancient criticism with the passage of time leavened his critical attitude. It is possible to find in his comments on books many passages that might well have been the result of a study of ancient criticism. Throughout his discussion of the arts there runs, for example, the doctrine of 'transport'. I take only two passages. One comes from a discussion of criticism<sup>37</sup>: 'If you read a book and let it work upon you, and yield yourself up entirely to its influence, then, and only then, will you arrive at a correct judgment of it'. The other is in Wilhelm Meister's famous critique of Hamlet<sup>38</sup>, 'The strength and tenderness, the power and peacefulness of this man, have so astonished and transported me. . . .'

Among the critics who stand nearer to us it is difficult to say that any has the stature of the men of whom

I have been speaking. In general the more radical modern critics agree with Longinus about the necessity that literature should move, should delight, and that the critic should examine a work to find out what it is in it that delights him, and should then conclude, as Longinus says (36.4), "... but let every man cherish the view which pleases him best". They agree with his insistence upon the close relationship between substance and form. But they do not agree with the moral implications of his dictum about greatness of soul and about the dependence of good writing upon the moral temper of the age, or with his requirement of rules. Mr. J. E. Spingarn cries<sup>39</sup>,

... We have done with all the old Rules. . . . We have done with the comic, the tragic, the sublime, and an army of vague abstractions of their kind. . . . We have done with the theory of style, with metaphor, simile, and all the paraphernalia of Graeco-Roman rhetoric. . . . We have done with all moral judgment of Literature. . . .

for the gospel according to Croce teaches that all art is expression and all expression is art. Yet, though the New Humanists seem to have disintegrated as a group, there are still their leaders, Professor Irving Babbitt, Mr. Paul Elmer More, and Mr. Norman Foerster, who have been combating during these last decades the doctrines of Croce and Spingarn, and have been insisting upon the "inner check" in morals, in art, and in criticism. Concerning the rules of genius Professor Irving Babbitt<sup>40</sup> wrote in answer to Mr. Spingarn,

... Though a man's genius may not be in his power, the control of this genius to some human end largely is. . . . If he is content to be a mere unchained force of nature, he may have genius, almost any amount of it, and yet remain, as Tennyson said of Hugo, only a 'weird Titan'.

Though other writers on aesthetics and criticism, e. g. Carrington, Santayana, and Richards, insist with Henry James that questions of art are questions of execution and should<sup>41</sup> not be mixed with questions of morality, they agree with him also in saying<sup>42</sup> that "No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind". Longinus said (9.3),

... the truly eloquent must be free from low and ignoble thoughts. For it is not possible that men with mean and servile ideas and aims prevailing throughout their lives should produce anything that is admirable and worthy of immortality. Great accents we expect to fall from the lips of those whose thoughts are deep and grave. . . .

#### IV

The process of cutting longitudinal sections through the literary criticism of the past three hundred and fifty years will reveal the fact that many of the matters which Longinus discussed and which have been touched on in the summary of his essay given above and in the comments made above on the work and views of later critics have been subjects of abiding or recurring interest. On some of these protracted discussions the

<sup>39</sup>The New Criticism, 20-26 (Columbia University Press, 1911).

<sup>40</sup>See Irving Babbitt, *Genius and Taste* (1918), reprinted in *Criticism in America* (Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1924).

<sup>41</sup>Professor Nitchie tells me that Mr. James wrote here "cannot"! Strange! One can mix—at least in writing—any two elements, however incongruous. Such mixing has been done all too often. See again note 2a, above. C. K. >

<sup>42</sup>*Criticism in America*, 327.

<sup>39a</sup>This is Chateaubriand's spelling. C. K. >

<sup>37</sup>See Goethe's *Literary Essays*, A Selection in English, Arranged by J. E. Spingarn, 141 (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921).

<sup>38</sup>*Ibidem*, 145.



direct influence of Longinus, as is already clear, can be traced, especially in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries; with others, the discussion of which continued through the nineteenth century and continues even in our own day, his connection, if not his influence, should be equally clear. It is obvious, for example, that those who have ranged themselves in opposition over the relation of art to morals have been debating whether good writing—this Longinus means when he says 'sublimity'<sup>42a</sup>—is or is not inevitably the echo of a great soul, and that those who have tried to answer for their own age the question raised by Longinus's philosopher as to the reason for the dearth of good writing have, in the main, replied either with the arguments of that philosopher, or, more rarely, with those of Longinus. Longinus's treatment of diction, in which he emphasizes the power of words, the necessity of the choice of the exact word and of the suitable word, whether elevated or verging on the vulgar, and supports boldness of diction and imagery when they are justified by passion, is echoed, consciously or unconsciously, again and again in the history of criticism. The list of pertinent names here is long: Dante, Puttenham, Ben Jonson, John Dennis, Charles Gildon (who vindicates the "meaner style" of Milton when that style is suited to his subject), Dryden (who follows Longinus in his discussion of diction and of figures of speech), Wernicke, Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Gautier, Joubert, Flaubert, Pater. The doctrine of poetic imitation, as it is expressed by such good critics as Ben Jonson, Dryden, and Edward Young, derives not from a mistaken interpretation or an unjustified extension of Aristotle's *poiesis*, or from Cicero or Quintilian, but from the passage (13.2-14.2) in which Longinus recommends the imitation and the emulation of great writers, the reception from them of effluences like the divine breath by which the Pythian priestess was inspired. Ben Jonson urges, as Longinus did, a writer to follow a great model "till he grow very he", and to ask himself how Homer or Demosthenes would have put his material into written form. Although Jonson makes no mention of Longinus, Dryden justifies his own imitation of Shakespeare by a specific appeal to Longinus's authority. Edward Young, who knew Longinus, in his *Conjectures on Original Composition*, which combats the imitation of the ancients in the ordinary sense of the word 'imitation', concludes in words that are "very he"<sup>42b</sup>:

...Must we, then, you say, not imitate ancient authors? Imitate them by all means; but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine *Iliad* does not imitate Homer; but he who takes the same method, which Homer took, for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great... Imitate; but imitate not the *Composition*, but the *Man*.

Most interesting of all and most illustrative of the connection between the thought of later centuries and that of Longinus is the great battle over Art and Nature. The problem is thus set forth by Longinus (2.1):

<sup>42a</sup>See my additions to note 13, above. C. K. >

<sup>42b</sup>Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition*, Edited by Edith J. Morley, 11 (Manchester: At the University Press, 1918).

...First of all, we must raise the question whether there is such a thing as an art of the sublime or lofty. Some hold that those are entirely in error who would bring such matters under the precepts of art. A lofty tone, says one, is innate, and does not come by teaching; nature is the only art that can compass it. Works of nature are, they think, made worse and altogether feebler when wizened by the rules of art....

In my opinion, the problem is settled by Longinus (22.1): "...For art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature hits the mark when she contains art hidden within her...." But the long line of later writers has not been able to dispose of the question so simply.

Longinus must have heartened both sides of this controversy. In the neo-classic period, when 'authority' counted for much, he is frequently cited. In the nineteenth century, for reasons already set forth, we do not find his name, but we do find his arguments. It has been customary to say that the neo-classic period, in criticism and in creative writing, adhered to the Rules, whereas the romantic period cast them aside. This statement is only as true as most generalizations are: the majority of Keats's contemporaries would have subscribed to his scorn of the "musty laws lined out by wretched rule and compass vile", and the majority of the writers in the day of Boileau and Dryden and Pope did abide by the Rules and did quote them. But the very leaders of both movements as well as many of the 'thousand handicraftsmen' challenged the universality of the standards of their own party. Take, for example, the two greatest names among the neo-classicists. Dryden said he "broke a rule for the sake of variety", scored the French dramatists for observing the rules too strictly, so that their plays had the beauties of a statue, not those of a man, and wrote of Ben Jonson<sup>43</sup>, "...If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit.... I admire him, but I love Shakespeare". Pope, whose practice in general was to be 'correct', in his *Essay on Criticism*, says (1.159-160), "Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend And rise to faults true Critics dare not mend". Some neo-classicists, at least, were willing to recognize greatness even in the violators of the Rules.

Indeed there was growing up at this time a school of critics who were laying less and less stress upon rules, more and more upon taste, upon the power of literature to please and to move the reader. 'I judge nothing', wrote the Chevalier de Méré<sup>44</sup>, 'I only say what I feel, and what effect each of these things produces on my heart and on my mind.... the best proof that the thing ought to please is that it does in fact please, especially in the case of people of good taste'. From this period we might cite many names, and we might add others from later times, Poe, Anatole France, even Arnold. What binds these men together is Longinus's conception that it is the function of literature to 'transport'. Longinus had not the charming nonchalance of members of this group who said that there was in good

<sup>43</sup>In his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.

<sup>44</sup>I give the passage in the translation by J. E. Spingarn, in *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, I.xcvi (see note 18a, above).

literature a 'je ne sais quoi' which was responsible for the 'transport'; he knew perfectly what moved him, and he brought Caecilius to book for 'side-stepping' this most important part of the critic's task. In general, perhaps, the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were more largely occupied in proving the usefulness of poetry in order to defend it from attack, but again and again, and more frequently as the years go on, there crops out insistence on the necessity of what De Quincey<sup>46</sup> called "the literature of power", a power whereby, as Wernicke<sup>47</sup> said, the poet is to 'transport' the souls of his readers and make of poetry something godlike.

Is, then, this poetry godlike in its superiority to the rules? Is it true that, as Young<sup>48</sup> said, "rules, like crutches, are a needful aid to the lame, though an impediment to the strong? A Homer casts them away"? This was an insistent question, and the history of it is shown nowhere so well as in the changing attitude toward Shakespeare's genius. First, however, Longinus must be allowed to speak, that we may know his attitude toward Homer and Demosthenes, who held for him the position that Shakespeare held for the critics who follow him. We have seen that in discussing the relation of art and nature Longinus took the position (2.2) that nature herself was not without system and that "the expression of the sublime is more exposed to danger when it goes its own way without the guidance of knowledge...." or art, and that the absence of art ruins natural genius, as the absence of natural genius keeps art from being great. More significant still is that long digression in Chapters 33-36, in which he sets forth the problem that so much later Browning set forth in *Andrea del Sarto*, and answered in the same way. Note Longinus's words (33.1):

...Is it not worth while...to raise the general question whether we ought to give the preference, in poems and prose writings, to grandeur with some attendant faults, or to success which is moderate but altogether sound and free from error? Aye, and further, whether a greater number of excellences, or excellences higher in quality, would in literature rightly bear away the palm?....

Longinus is well aware that lofty genius is far removed from flawlessness, whereas low and average natures may well remain free from falling just because (33.2) they "never run a risk or seek to scale the heights, while great endowments prove insecure because of their very greatness...." He has noted and deplored errors on the part of Homer and other great writers, but considers them not wilful errors but due to the heedlessness of genius. He writes (33.4):

...Consequently I do not waver in my view that excellences higher in quality, even if not sustained throughout, should always on a comparison be voted the first place, because of their sheer elevation of spirit if for no other reason....

He continues by making many comparisons between the mediocre but faultless and the great but faulty. He

compares Apollonius and Homer, Eratosthenes and Archilochus ("with that outburst of the divine spirit within him which it is difficult to bring under the rules of law...." [33.5]), Bacchylides and Pindar, Ion and Sophocles, Hyperides and Demosthenes. Writers of this magnitude, though they are far removed from faultlessness, none the less all rise above what is mortal; though all their other qualities prove them to be men, "sublimity raises them near the majesty of God...." (36.1); "while immunity from errors relieves from censure, it is grandeur that excites admiration...." (36.1). Moreover, a single sublime and happy touch may redeem all a writer's failures. Indeed, the blunders of the greatest writers, massed together, "would be found to be a very small part, nay an infinitesimal fraction, of the triumphs which those heroes achieve on every hand...." (36.2).

"Which of the Greeklings", demanded Ben Jonson, "durst ever give precepts to Demosthenes?" To Shakespeare, however, Jonson himself durst give precepts, in that passage in *Timber*<sup>49</sup> in which he records his wish that Shakespeare, whom he loved and honored "on this side idolatry", had blotted a thousand lines, for "he flowed with that facility that sometime it was necessary that he should be stopped...." But Jonson was no Greekling. Moreover, he says that Shakespeare "redeemed his vices with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned"<sup>50</sup>. The realization that Shakespeare was an "irregular genius" runs through Shakespearean criticism for the next two hundred years. The justification of a dramatist who obviously broke all the rules of dramatic writing (even, in the eyes of the strict neo-classicist, the rule about unity of action) naturally led Dryden and his contemporaries to the same line of thought as that of Longinus in regard to the freedom of genius from the domination of the rules, the superiority of the faulty sublime to the faultless mediocre, and the fact that it is the large number and the high quality of beauties that count, not the small number of faults. These men were still, to some extent, under the domination of the rules. Unable to do anything but recognize the genius of Shakespeare, they were forced to argue with Pope<sup>51</sup>,

If, where the rules not far enough extend  
(Since rules were made but to promote their end),  
Some lucky Licence answer to the full  
Th' intent propos'd, that Licence is a rule.

They said, with Dryden<sup>52</sup>, of Shakespeare,

...All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily;... he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature.... I cannot say that he is every where alike.... But he is always great when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

<sup>49</sup>In his discussion "De Shakespeare Nostrat[i]". <I give this title as it appears in a work entitled *Timber, or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter*, Edited with Introduction and Notes, by Felix E. Schelling, 23 (Ginn, 1892). C. K.>.

<sup>50</sup>This passage reminds me by contrast of what Horace said of Lucilius, in *Sermones* 1.4.11 cum fluere lutulentus, erat quod tollere velles, and *Sermones* 1.10.50-51 At dixi fluere hunc lutulentum, saepe ferentem plura quidem tollenda relinquendis. C. K.>.

<sup>51</sup>Essay on Criticism 1.140-149.

<sup>52</sup>In *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.

<sup>46</sup>In *The Poetry of Pope*, originally published in *The North British Review* for August, 1848, reprinted in *Collected Writings*, etc., II, 514 (see note 31, above).

<sup>47</sup>See Ludwig Fulda, *Die Gegner der Zweiten Schlesiischen Schule*, 2.519 (Two volumes, which are volumes 38-39 of *Deutsche National-Literatur* [Berlin, W. Spemann, 1883-1884]).

<sup>48</sup>See page 14 of the work named in note 43, above.

Addison declares<sup>52</sup> that critics have been led into absurdities because they have not considered

that, 1st, There is sometimes a greater Judgment shewn in deviating from the Rules of Art, than in adhering to them; and 2dly, That there is more beauty in the Works of a great Genius who is ignorant of all the Rules of Art, than in the Works of a little Genius, who not only knows, but scrupulously observes them.... Our inimitable *Shakespear* is a Stumbling-block to the whole Tribe of these rigid Criticks. Who would not rather read one of his Plays, where there is not a single Rule of the Stage observed, than any Production of a modern Critick, where there is not one of them violated?....

Pope uses many of the same arguments in his discussion of Homer (in the Preface to his translation of the *Iliad*).

The attitude of these English critics, especially their attitude toward Shakespeare, affected Voltaire's judgment of Homer. In his Essay on Epick Poetry, published in England, in English, in 1727, Voltaire had criticized Homer very unfavorably because of his 'faults'. But in the French version of this essay, published six years later, the chapter on Homer is quite different in tone. Voltaire there admits that he once saw only the faults of Homer, or saw his beauties obscured by his faults. It had been so, he continues, with Shakespeare, whose plays to him "sont monstres en tragedie", and he could not conceive why the English admired him. But, as he learned English and studied Shakespeare, he came to realize that Englishmen saw Shakespeare's faults as he did, but that they also saw his great beauties; that it is the privilege of an inventive genius to make a way where no one has walked before him: he runs without guide, without art, without rule, but he leaves far behind him all those who have only reason and exactness to recommend them. Although this praise of Homer is somewhat vitiated by Voltaire's subsequent return to his dislike of him, it reflects the general attitude of such neo-classic critics as were impelled to remove from the path of criticism those stumbling-blocks, the plays of Shakespeare, or rather to show that they were not stumbling-blocks at all.

In spite of Pope's insistence, in which he follows very reasonably the philosophical thought of his day, that Nature and Homer were the same and that to copy Nature was to copy the Rules, for they were Nature methodized, to most of the critics of the neo-classic period Nature and Art stood opposed to each other. He who, like Shakespeare, departed from the Rules, was a product of Nature, and was great only by Nature, by instinct; he who observed the Rules was great by Art. The word 'nature' is so Protean during the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century that one becomes giddy in trying to hold on to a conception of it consistent enough to be useful either in philosophy or in criticism. The romantic school of criticism came to the defense of Shakespeare with a somewhat different idea of nature and its connection with art from that of the neo-classicists. Shakespeare himself, rather than Longinus, may have given the cue

to them in the famous verses about the "gillivors" in *The Winter's Tale* (4.4.86-97), so often quoted by Coleridge and Hazlitt:

*Perdita.* For I have heard it said  
There is an art which in their piedness shares  
With great creating nature.

*Polixenes.* Say there be;  
Yet nature is made better by no mean,  
But nature makes that mean; so, o'er that art  
Which you say adds to nature, is an art  
That nature makes. .... This is an art  
Which does mend nature,—change it rather; but  
The art itself is nature.

It would be pleasant if we could prove that Shakespeare was thinking of Longinus's discussion of Art and Nature. But it is hardly probable that his small Latin and less Greek included a treatise which Jonson himself does not mention. However that may be, Shakespeare's admirers in England, Coleridge and A. W. Schlegel, at almost the same time, and with strange unanimity in thought and expression, were scouting the prevailing idea of him as a "great dramatist by mere instinct" and proving his judgment equal to his genius. The irregularity and the extravagances of Shakespeare, says Coleridge<sup>54</sup>, were mere dreams of pedantry. "The spirit of poetry", he continues, "like all other living powers, must of necessity circumscribe itself by rules, were it only to unite power with beauty". "Does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truth to man?" This sounds like strange doctrine from a romantic, who, presumably, has done with rules. But the form of which Coleridge is speaking is not mechanical; it is organic, like that of nature. Pope's Rules, in spite of his identification of them with Nature, Coleridge scorned as man-made and mechanical. But, as he says in his *Biographia Literaria*<sup>55</sup>, "The rules of the Imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production". This romantic stress on imagination as something more than mere memory or the creation of images, as something organic, reminds one strongly of Longinus. So does the romantic theory of poetry as the individual emotional interpretation of experience and recreation of that experience in the reader. That theory, however, carried to extremes with a minimum of emphasis upon intellectual control of emotion and imagination, led, logically enough, beyond Longinus to a belief that a great writer like Shakespeare must be perfect. Coleridge and Schlegel<sup>56</sup> compared him to a Gothic cathedral, which, even with its imperfections, is to be preferred, as Browning was to say later in *Old Pictures in Florence*<sup>57</sup>, to classic repose and perfection. But, as Chateaubriand<sup>58</sup> had been arguing that the very defects of La Fontaine or Corneille were in truth virtues, so De Quincey maintained that Shakespeare could do no wrong. An extreme example of what G. B. Shaw calls "bardolatry" is to be found in the eloquent

<sup>52</sup>Shakespeare's Judgment Equal to his Genius. See also A. W. Schlegel, *Dramatische Vorlesungen*, 12.

<sup>53</sup>See Chapter 18 (1817).

<sup>54</sup>See the passages quoted in note 54, above.

<sup>55</sup>See especially stanzas 16-17.

<sup>56</sup>See Chateaubriand, *Mélanges Littéraires*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, Nouvelle Édition, 6.530-532 (Twelve volumes. Garnier Frères [Paris, undated]).

<sup>57</sup>See *The Spectator*, 592 (Friday, September 10, 1714).



apostrophe to Shakespeare at the end of *On the Knocking at the Gate in "Macbeth"*:

...O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art, but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers, like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert, but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!

More temperately Longinus recognized the presence of faults in Demosthenes or in Homer, but considered those faults negligible in view of the virtues which had raised these writers "near the majesty of God". Longinus's more moderate outlook and his sense of the controlling intellect which, he says (16.4), showed Demosthenes that "even in the revels of the imagination sobriety is required" are paralleled in Pater's stress, in his essays on Style and on Coleridge, upon "mind" and logic as necessities for the construction of a work of art. Pater's thought is closer to that of Longinus than is the thought of such romantic enthusiasts as Coleridge and De Quincey. Contemporary criticism, however, in the theories of Croce and his followers, has swung away again to a faith in the intuitive which outdoes that of the romantic group. On the other hand, we have those among us who believe that "the employment of art is in every way a fitting aid to nature; for it is the conjunction of the two which tends to ensure perfection" (Longinus 36.4). So Longinus has the last word.

## V

It is, then, by the kind of imitation which Longinus himself commends that modern critics from the time of the Renaissance have, intentionally or not, flattered Longinus. If our modern critics have in them less of the rhetorician than Longinus had, if they discuss a few matters—after all, how few!—upon which he did not touch, if they draw for their illustrations, not upon three literatures only, but upon many (how long criticism waited for this international view!), if, as Young<sup>59</sup> says, "by the bounty of Nature we are as our predecessors; and by the favour of time (which is but another round in Nature's scale) we stand on no higher ground", we can answer, with Mr. T. S. Eliot<sup>60</sup>, "Someone said: 'The dead writers are remote from us because we *know* so much more than they did'. Precisely, and they are that which we know".

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## CLASSICAL ARTICLES IN NON-CLASSICAL PERIODICALS

### X

The Cambridge Historical Journal—Volume IV, Number 2, The Tradition about Caligula, M. P. Charlesworth ["...Both Suetonius and Dio are quite un-

trustworthy as regards Gaius' personal character, Dio through his love for drama and sensation, and Suetonius because his items are often the merest hearsay or gossip.... The kernel of the tradition, as we meet it in Josephus, is probably correct enough; it is against the later rhetoric and extravagances that we must be on our guard"].

The Connoisseur—October, Short review, uncritical, unsigned, of "The Rockefeller McCormick New Testament", edited by Edgar J. Goodspeed, Donald W. Riddle, and Harold R. Willoughby.

The Contemporary Review—July, Review, uncritical, by J. E. G. de M., of Cyril Bailey, Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome.

The Economic Journal—December, Short review, unfavorable, by G. Duncan, of A. M. Andréadès, History of Greek Public Finance, Volume I, Translated by C. N. Brown.

The English Historical Review—October, Short notice, favorable, by D. C. M., of G. N. Cross, Epirus: A Study in Greek Constitutional Development; Short notice, qualifiedly favorable, by W. H. V. R., of C. H. McIlwain, The Growth of Political Thought in the West; Short notice, unfavorable, by D. C. M., of T. R. Glover, Greek Byways; Short notice, uncritical, by E. H. M., of A. R. Anderson, Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations.

The English Journal—October, The Classical Allusions in *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II, W. Edward Farrison ["...Judging by the variety of allusions he employs and his methods of introducing and developing them—where he develops them at all—one is led to believe that Milton assumed on the part of his readers a very broad, though perhaps general, knowledge of classical literature—the mythological parts of it in particular...."].

The Expository Times—July, Xenophon and St. John, unsigned [this is a brief note]; October, Short notice, mildly favorable, unsigned, of Robert Leet Patterson, The Conception of God in the Philosophy of Aquinas; Submerged Aorists, R. G. Dunbar; November, The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, C. A. Phillips ["The discovery and publication of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri are not only the most recent of the important finds and events of the last fifty years: they present in a remarkable way a climax, especially with regard to the latest feature and problem which has emerged in the textual study of Gospels, and now known as the 'Caesarean' text...."]; December, Letters to Women on the Christian Faith: Jerome to Marcella, James Moffatt.

The Golden Book Magazine—October, From the Love Poems of Catullus, Translated by Horace Gregory [this is a translation of Catullus 51.1-12].

The Harvard Graduates' Magazine—September, John Wilson's Latin Verses on John Harvard, E. K. Rand.

The Harvard Theological Review—July-October, Un Fragment de Rituel d'Initiation aux Mystères, Franz Cumont; Legitimus Honor: A Note on Hellenistic Ruler-Worship, Charles F. Edson, Jr.

<sup>59</sup>On page 12 of the work named in note 43, above.

<sup>60</sup>In *The Sacred Word*, 52 (London, Methuen, 1932).

Hispanic Review—April, The Apollo and Daphne Myth as Treated by Lope de Vega and Calderon, by H. M. Martin.

The Illustrated London News—July 1, A Cultural Centre of the Bronze Age: New Evidence of the Importance of Cyprus as a Link Between East and West in the Second Millennium B. C., Einar Gjerstad [with sixteen photographic illustrations. "To sum up: the excavations at Enkomi, Ajios Jakovos, and Nitovikla have revealed a rich and varied material, which will elucidate the artistic, religious, and military life of Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age...."]; July 8, The Discovery of a Heraeum on the Gulf of Corinth: British Research at Perachora: An Early Roman Temple of Hera Limenia (Protectress of the Harbour) Found, and "A Remarkable Series of Small Objects", H. G. G. Payne [with nineteen photographic illustrations. "... Of the inscribed votives, in all there have been found three with dedications to Hera, not 'Akraia' (as the temple is called by ancient authors), but 'Limenia' (of the harbour); it is, therefore, quite certain that this early temple, placed above the sheltering curve of a dangerous headland, was sacred to Hera, who in this case was regarded as the protectress of the harbour"]; July 15, The Oldest Dwellings Found in Mesopotamia (Circa 2500 B. C.): New Discoveries at Tel Asmar: Ruins of the Akkadian City of Eshnunna, Capital of King Sargon, about 2500 B. C.; and Fresh Links with Ancient India, Henry Frankfort [with sixteen photographic illustrations, one reconstruction drawing, and one colored Plate. "... we concentrated this year our attention on that part of Tell Asmar where we had formerly located the oldest remains and, amongst them, certain proof of commercial contact with India—in the third millennium B. C...."]; July 22, The Oriental Origin of Hercules: The Temple of the Lord of Vegetation at Eshnunna Where Iron Was Used a Thousand Years Before Tutankhamen, Henry Frankfort [with nine photographic illustrations, and one reconstruction drawing]; July 29, Jewish Prototypes of Early Christian Art?: Unique Frescoes Found in a Third-Century Synagogue at Dura-Europos; A Discovery that Reopens the Question of Christian Art Origins, Clark Hopkins [with twenty-two photographic illustrations. "... A few early mosaics in synagogues, chiefly of the fourth and fifth centuries, are preserved in Palestine; but at Dura for the first time appears the mural painting of the synagogue and a really great series of Old Testament scenes interpreted by the Jews themselves...."]; August 12, New Acquisitions at the Ashmolean Museum: Fine Coins and Pottery [a group of photographic illustrations, with captions. Some of the articles illustrated are of interest to classical students]; August 26, The "Cock-horse" in Greek Art; and Roman Portrait Heads: New Discoveries in the Agora at Athens, Theodore Leslie Shear [thirteen photographic illustrations, and one "after a water-colour". They are accompanied by a descriptive note];

September 2, Third-Century Art at Dura-Europos: Sculpture Reliefs, Wall-Paintings, and Woven Fabric: Horse-Armour and a Unique Painted Shield From a Third-Century Site in Syria: Dura-Europos Finds, Clark Hopkins [fifteen photographic illustrations, accompanied by a descriptive note]; September 23, A Second-Century Roman Burial at Colchester; and Relics from King Cymbeline's Capital, unsigned [seven photographic illustrations, with a descriptive note]; Mechanism in the Ancient Roman World: Scales, Flour-mills, Olive-Press, and Fish Pond, unsigned [six photographic illustrations, with a descriptive note. "... This Neapolitan collection of mechanical appliances is unique in that most of them are actual relics of the past discovered at Pompeii or Herculaneum, with missing parts completed in wood, and shown in operation just as they were used some 2000 or more years ago...."]; September 30, "The Tomb of the Bronze Flabella": 6th-Century B. C. Etruscan Fans; Armour; Pottery, Doro Levi [with seven photographic illustrations]; November 11, "The Vision of the Ancients Conjured up by Pompeii and Herculaneum": New and Wonderful Discoveries, unsigned [five photographic illustrations, accompanied by a descriptive note].

The International Journal of Ethics—October, Review, very favorable, by G. S. Brett, of Paul Shorey, What Plato Said; Review, generally favorable, by Paul Shorey, of Arthur Kenyon Rogers, The Socratic Problem.

Isis—November, Leonhard Euler's Elastic Curves (De Curvis Elasticis, Additamentum I to his Methodus Inveniendi Lineas Curvas Maximi Minimive Proprietate Gaudentes, Lausanne and Geneva, 1744), Translated and Annotated by W. A. Oldfather, C. A. Ellis, and D. M. Brown [with facsimiles of the title page and of three plates of diagrams]; Review, favorable, by George Sarton, of Claudii Ptolemaei Geographiae Codex Urbinas Graecus 82, Phototypice Depictus Consilio et Opera Curatorum Bibliothecae Vaticanae; Review, favorable, by George Sarton, of Geography of Claudius Ptolemy, Translated into English and Edited by Edward Luther Stevenson, Based upon Greek and Latin Manuscripts and Important Late Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century Printed Editions, Including Reproductions of the Maps from the Ebner Manuscript, ca. 1460, With an Introduction by Joseph Fischer.

Journal of Biblical Literature—June-September, The Elizabeth Day McCormick Apocalypse: Its Discovery, Edgar J. Goodspeed; Description of the Manuscript, Ernest Cadman Colwell; The Cycle of Text Illustrations, Harold R. Willoughby [with two photographic illustrations and a list of the sixty-nine "Text Illustrations"]; The Vocabulary of the New Testament, Arthur Darby Nock; December, A Theory of Two Translators For the Greek Genesis, O. J. Baab; The Mechanics of Translation Greek, J. M. Rife.

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